

In June 1975, Henry Mohr was promoted to major general and called to active duty to serve as the Chief of the Army Reserve, commanding an Active Reserve Force of over 225,000 soldiers. During his 4-year command, General Mohr committed himself totally to the improvement of military readiness, appearing frequently before Congress to testify on immediate and strategic readiness issues, not the least of which was combat medical care, the first responsibility this Nation has to those it sends in harm's way.

The medals he wore were a testament to his character. The Nation awarded him a Legion of Merit, a Bronze Star with "V" device for Valor, Presidential Unit Citation, Meritorious Service Medal with Oak Leaf Cluster, and, upon retirement, the Distinguished Service Medal.

Impressive as it is, Major General Mohr's character was by no means defined solely by his military service. He was a devoted husband to his wife Dorothy and father of 2 sons, Philip Mohr of Lake Saint Louis, and David Mohr of Table Rock, MO, 5 grandsons, and he had 10 great grandchildren.

Mr. Speaker, to know General Mohr was to know a man of unmatched integrity and character, an officer who first and foremost cared for his troops, a man possessed of both physical and moral courage, a man who, as his family, his many friends and his fellow soldiers around the country will tell you, embodied what it means to be a patriot, a citizen soldier, a war hero, an American of the most exemplary kind. He always stood for the service and for his men, without regard to the consequences to himself personally.

We have lost a good man in Maj. Gen. Henry Mohr, his lifelong example of selfless service most of us can only aspire to. The man who can fill his boots is a rare man indeed. I hope and trust that many will accept the challenge.

To quote Shakespeare, in Julius Caesar,

... the elements so mix'd in him that Nature might stand up and say to all the world, "This was a man!"

General Mohr, it was an honor to know you and consider you my friend. I appreciate the advice you gave to me on military issues over the years.

Good-bye, General, God bless you. Your country will miss you.

NO TAXATION WITH REFORMATION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 1997, the gentleman from New York [Mr. PAXON] is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. PAXON. Mr. Speaker, since January 1995, since the Republican majority took over the operation of the House of Representatives and the leadership of the Congress of the United States, we have accomplished, I think, many great things, many important steps forward, fulfilling our commit-

ment to provide a new direction for this country, the will of the American people.

Those successes I believe are in many ways historic, starting with the very opening days of that Congress in January 1995, the decision to reform Congress, to open the doors of this institution once again to the American people, to diminish the power of the all-powerful committee chairs that in the past did what they chose, not what the American people chose, for example.

We also were able to pass what I think will go down in history as one of the most historic pieces of legislation of any Congress, basic fundamental welfare reform, giving our States the opportunity to replace welfare with work requirements.

We passed illegal immigration reform, and freedom to farm legislation for the first time in 60 years, changing the face positively of American farming. We passed telecommunications reform, and this year plan to extend the life of the Medicare System that has saved the lives of my parents and so many other Americans, as well as tax relief for families.

Last, but not least, we passed legislation that will balance our Nation's budget no later than the year 2002, hopefully even sooner if we can keep our steady hand on the rudder in controlling wasteful Washington spending.

These are important accomplishments, but I think the most important accomplishment is just on the horizon, and to illustrate that I want to go back to the issue of balancing our Nation's budget.

You know, sometimes we as Americans are so forward looking that we do not even look back 15 or 20 minutes, much less a couple of years. But it was two decades or longer that people in this Chamber and Americans across the country talked about, "jeez, cannot we get Congress to balance our Nation's budget again? Cannot we get our government to live within the means of the American taxpayer?"

We spent decades and decades talking about balancing our Nation's budget, but, you know, it was that Contract With America in 1994 that, right out on the steps of this Capitol, looking out across the country, we signed our names to and committed ourselves to, that finally moved the talk of balancing the Nation's budget to the reality of getting it done, the hard work of getting the Nation's budget balanced.

We walked out on those steps, signed that document, and said not just that we would balance it; we turned that talk into action and said it would be done no later than 2002.

Again, we are Americans and like to look ahead, and we sometimes forget the obstacles out there. Not only were the institutional forces of Washington, DC, opposed to balancing the budget, but they would like us to continue to just go on our merry way of spending more than we take in to pander to all

the groups that Washington likes to pander to.

But you know, more than that, it just becomes an act of self-preservation of so many in Congress to talk about balancing the budget, and not really get down to turned that into action in saying the budget would be balanced no later than 2002, and let the national debate begin.

Ultimately, even the opposition of the President and the other party here in the Congress could not stop the will of the American people in getting that budget balanced. Once we put that marker down, that it will be balanced by 2002, the debate began and we were able to capture the attention of the American people and build the momentum necessary to balance our Nation's budget.

Now, that process of laying down a date certain and of moving toward it is fundamental to tackling another important issue before this country that we have talked and talked and talked about for years, but we just cannot seem to get under way, and that is sweeping income tax reform.

Everywhere I go in my district in upstate New York, in the Buffalo and Rochester New York regions and western New York and the Finger Lakes, and as I have traveled around the country and also talked to colleagues from both parties around the country, everybody at home and across America seems to agree: They are tired of the IRS and the intrusiveness of that 5.5 million-word Tax Code in their everyday lives.

They want fundamental change in the Tax Code. The American people want to have that kind of fundamental change. But Congress just keeps talking about this reform, without moving forward on it.

Of course, in this body we have some great proposals. We have proposals for a national sales tax to replace the income tax. We have proposals to have a flat rate income tax to replace the current income tax system. There are many other ideas out there, but we just cannot seem to move from talking about it to acting upon it.

Every day we wait, that Tax Code keeps putting a greater and greater burden on the backs of the American people. Just think about it for a minute. A 5.5 million-word Tax Code enforced by 110,000 people in the Internal Revenue Service defines everything we do as American citizens. It limits our personal and economic freedom. The Tax Code discriminates against children, it discriminates against families, it discriminates against small business people and entrepreneurs. It encourages hundreds of billions of dollars, hundreds of billions of dollars, in the underground economy and in tax avoidance, things that never end up on the books, so the government can never collect its share of them in tax revenue. Certainly the Tax Code and its complexity and unfairness lead most folks to distrust this very Congress and this very government that

has put together this monstrosity we call the Internal Revenue Code. Some friends of mine at home call the Infernal Revenue Code, and I can understand it.

When you look back on the history of the Tax Code you can understand a bit of this. In 1913, when it was put in place, the Tax Code consisted of 11,400 words. Today, it is over 5.5 million. Americans spend \$157 billion in tax compliance, having to spend that kind of money to comply with the Tax Code, just putting together all the paperwork they need to maintain and all the other reference they have to undertake, and it amounts to 5.5 billion hours wasted in this country every year putting together tax codes and compliance with the Tax Code. Gosh, couldn't you find better things with your time than complying with all those regulations?

Of course, in my view, the worst impact of this Tax Code is the fact that it has unfairly impacted families and families with children. When I was growing up in the fifties, the early fifties, the tax burden was about 3 or 4 or, at the most, 5 percent of family income. Today, the tax burden, the Federal tax burden, is about 25 percent of family income, and the total combined tax burden, Federal, State and local, is in the 38 to 40 percent range, depending upon where you live in this country.

We all agree, most of us agree, most in America and a growing number here in Congress, agree that the Internal Revenue Code and all it means is a national scandal and a disgrace that holds the greatness of this country back as we approach this new and next millennium.

I believe that if we apply the same principles and the same definition to the issue of tax reform that this Congress did to balancing our Nation's budget, putting a date certain to it, initiating a national debate, we could accomplish great things.

You know, it is almost like a race. You can talk about running a foot race, but until you establish the goal line for that race, the finish line, and until somebody shoots the starting gun to begin that race, there is no race.

We did that with balancing the budget. We said there is the goal line, 2002. Let us begin the race, figure out how we solve this problem by that year.

If we do the same thing with changing our tax system, I think we can see fundamental reform occur. Let us act now, this fall, to put on the President's desk a bill repealing the Federal income tax code.

Now, that is exactly what I did. This Tuesday I submitted legislation that would accomplish that goal. It is H.R. 2483. My legislation will effectively sunset the entire Federal Income Tax Code, absent two provisions, on December 31 in the year 2000.

Three short years from this December the Federal Income Tax Code would be sunsetted, in effect repealed, under the legislation I have sponsored. The two provisions that would still be in ef-

fect are Medicare and Social Security. I repealed 96 of 99 chapters of that 5.5 million-word Federal Income Tax Code.

Now, if we have the courage and commitment in this Congress to see this through, think of what this will mean. It means that 3 short years from now, three Christmases from now, on New Year's Eve 2000, Americans everywhere will get together to celebrate good riddance, wishing good riddance to the 5.5 million words of freedom-limiting gobbledygook in the Tax Code.

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We will also say good bye to almost all of the 110,000 bureaucrats who enforce this Tax Code with what I consider a sledgehammer, and that is the fact that we, under their eyes and under the law, are guilty until we prove ourselves innocent. It is the only place in American society really where we have that mentality, that we are guilty, we have to prove ourselves innocent.

Nothing gets Washington off its duff faster than a deadline, and my legislation, H.R. 2483, would impose one heck of a deadline. That is why I am calling this legislation "No Taxation Without Reformation."

I am pleased that already many Members of Congress on both sides of the aisle have come forward to encourage this bill forward. Many are signing up to cosponsor H.R. 2483, and I am particularly pleased with the fact that the largest grassroots business organization in America, the National Federation of Independent Business, the NFIB, is stepping forward and beginning a national campaign on the issue of sunseting the Federal Tax Code effective December 31 in the year 2000. They intend to go coast-to-coast collecting signatures of millions of Americans to present to Congress to say we want this Tax Code sunsetted. I am so encouraged by the fact that Jack Ferris and the NFIB are taking this leadership role. I am convinced that its going to have a major impact on moving this legislation forward.

Now, the impact of sunseting the Federal Tax Code is not an end, it is the beginning. It is the gun that shoots off the debate that establishes the finish line for the race. What kind of things could we consider, then, if we begin this debate? Well, I mentioned several.

We can talk about a flat rate income tax as proposed by many folks in this Chamber, most notably the majority leader, the gentleman from Texas [Mr. ARMEY]. He wants to bounce that Tax Code and replace it with a tax system we can fill out on a postcard. We list our income and a few basic deductions and multiply it by a percentage point and send in the check. That easy. No more need to go to H&R Block and no more need to go to accountants and attorneys, no more need to keep extensive records. That easy, that simple.

Now others, including the esteemed chairman of the Committee on Ways

and Means, the gentleman from Texas [Mr. ARCHER], who has just conducted the tax relief provisions that we have carried forward this July in the 5-year budget plan, Chairman ARCHER wants to move forward by replacing the entire Income Tax Code with a national sales or consumption tax. We would not even have any income taxes, and that national sales tax is an alternative to the current income tax.

Then there are other proposals and many, many of them filed. There is a new one out by the Cato Institute, a very, very respected think tank that has put forward what they call the alternative maximum tax that would say that one would pay no more than 25 percent of gross income. They keep in effect, they put in place again the Federal Income Tax Code, and one could still take all of the deductions, all of the other benefits of the current system if one so chooses, or if one did not want to do that, one would just pay 25 percent of one's income. If one chose that, the alternative maximum tax, one would know that there was a ceiling the tax could not go above.

These are all great ideas. There are a lot of great ideas in this Chamber, and quite frankly there are a lot of even greater ideas probably out across the country that we have not even heard of yet that may come forward; new nuances, new ideas that could help bring about fundamental change. But our goal and the benefit that we derive of having H.R. 2483 passed is that it will begin this debate and allow Americans to come forward with these ideas.

Now, I do not know about every Member of Congress, but I know my constituents. Sometimes, and rightfully so, they are a little skeptical of what we do here. We like to talk about these great changes, but I know when I go home on weekends and conduct town meetings in western New York and the Finger Lakes, a lot of people say to me, "Paxon, it sounds good, but when is it going to get underway? When are you going to start this?"

I am hoping that if we can get Members of Congress on board, get Members of the Senate on board, get this legislation, H.R. 2483, passed into law and down to the President this fall, we can get this national debate underway on replacing that income tax system with a flatter and fairer tax, a flat tax, or with a national sales tax or some other proposal.

I am excited about this. I am encouraged by this momentum that we are seeing develop this week alone. I could not help but be encouraged when I sat down today and took a look at some of the statistics regarding our current income tax system.

I know there are a few folks across America, and certainly there are many in this Chamber, who say well, the Devil is better than the one we do not know, and maybe we better stick with the current system. But just think about some of these things that involve our current Tax Code. The complexity is staggering.

In the 1980's alone, the tax laws were changed over 100 times. In 1986 alone, the 1986 Tax Reform Act, they added over 100 new tax forms to the IRS, 100 new forms one had to look at and fill out.

Now, no wonder every year that goes by, more Americans find it impossible to figure out their own taxes. I do not need to tell my colleagues, as Members of Congress, most of them are honest, but we end up having to go to tax preparers, I know I do, because I cannot figure it out any better than the folks that I represent back in upstate New York.

The percentage of Americans using professional tax preparers rose from 41 percent in 1981 to about 50 percent today who use professional tax preparers. Money Magazine reported that the tax bill that we passed this summer and that was signed into law in August will add 37 new lines to the form used to report capital gains alone.

Now, I am very pleased that we were able to bring about reductions in capital gains taxes, but even in our effort to try to bring about reductions in capital gains taxes we added 37 new lines to the form, and you know and I know that we are going to have to go out, most Americans, and hire somebody to help us fill out those forms with all of these increases in complexity that have been put into place.

There is a huge burden in compliance with the Tax Code. Individuals spend 1.7 billion hours per year filling out their taxes. Businesses spend 3.4 billion hours filling out their taxes. No wonder two out of three or more small businesses fail in their first 2 years just trying to deal with all of this complexity, and that means job losses for Americans. Of course, and I know this is no surprise to people in my district, the problems of the IRS are profound. In 1989 alone, the IRS answered just 62.8 percent of taxpayer questions correctly. This means 24 million Americans were given the wrong answer.

In 1995, about half of the computer-generated correction notices contained inaccurate information from the IRS, and about 40 percent of the revenue collected from IRS penalty assessments was abated, set aside, when citizens challenged the penalties. Just think about that. Forty percent of the revenue that the IRS assessed was abated or repealed when people challenged their IRS decisions.

Now, folks and my colleagues, I just think that those kind of statistics should make us really understand how compelling the need is for swift action to repeal the IRS code that I want to do under H.R. 2483 and replace it with some other system. But if that does not make us want to do it, these figures will.

Earlier this year the House passed legislation, H.R. 1226, to provide criminal penalties, criminal penalties for IRS employees who snoop through taxpayer records. We may say, well, is that really happening? According to

the General Accounting Office, there have been over 1,000 incidents reported of IRS snooping in taxpayer files. I want to make clear, it is not every IRS employee, it is a small number that are doing this. However, in my home area, in Buffalo, NY in early April of this year it was revealed that 18 Buffalo IRS agents snooped through tax returns, and unfortunately just two were fired for their actions.

We have 110,000 IRS employees in this bureaucracy, most of whom are doing their job diligently, but they are enforcing a Tax Code that is unenforceable, indecipherable, misunderstood by everybody, whether one is trying to prepare taxes or the folks who oversee it, and then we find a few people are abusing their jobs at the IRS, and out of the 18 of the agents that were charged, just 2 were fired in my hometown of Buffalo, NY.

The IRS itself has grown dramatically. Today, the IRS employs 113,000 people. I was wrong, it is not 110, it is 113,000. But contrast that with other Federal agencies. The FBI out there on the front lines of the war against criminals, only 24,000 compared to the 113,000 at the IRS. The Immigration Service, 12,000 defending our borders, yet 10 times that many in the IRS. The Drug Enforcement Administration waging a tough fight against the war on drugs, only 5,700 employees. We have 113,000 in the IRS. The border patrol again at our Nation's borders, 5,800 people.

Would it not be better if we could get rid of that IRS, get rid of that Tax Code, replace it with a flatter, fairer income tax or a national sales tax or consumption tax or something else, and take some of those IRS employees and retrain them to help our FBI agents in the war on crime or our border patrol or our INS or our DEA as they try to keep people out or keep drugs out of our Nation.

Of course recently, and again I know this is no surprise, folks at home and in this Chamber know these statistics, but Money Magazine every year selects a group of professional tax preparers and asks them to complete the tax returns for a fictional family. They put together some numbers. The same numbers are submitted to a group of professional preparers.

This past March Money Magazine gave this test to 45 different preparers, and it comes as no surprise, they received 45 different answers. Only one-quarter of the preparers even came within \$1,000 of the correct answer. How can we have confidence in a system that is so impossible to comprehend, even by the professionals who are supposed to understand all of this?

Now, it is not the first time that we would have the opportunity to repeal the income tax. In 1861 the U.S. Government passed the first income tax. It was 3 percent on net incomes over \$800, and 1.5 percent on income from government bonds. The tax was so unpopular that the Treasury Secretary then, Salmon P. Chase, refused to collect it.

In 1862 Congress mandated the collection of this income tax that remained in effect even after the Civil War ended. It was so unpopular that Congress passed a law in 1870 to repeal the income tax starting in 1872. Now, it did not take commissions or blue ribbon panels to figure that out. They set a deadline, they passed the tax, and then they repealed it.

My friends, I have to say this. My colleagues in this Chamber, the time has come to do what the American people want us to do. The time has come to have some courage, to stand up and say we are going to turn our backs on the special interests, we are going to turn our backs to the special interest breaks that are out there for a few, the privileged few. We are going to tell our constituents that it is time to involve them in the process, for a change, of determining policy in this country.

Let us shoot that gun to start the debate, the race. Let us set the finish line of December 31, 2000, to sunset the Federal Tax Code, to end it, and let us begin that great race, that great debate, that great discussion with the American people on what should replace it.

I am convinced that this Congress has done many great things in the past couple of years: welfare reform, the effort to balance our Nation's budget, so many other good pieces of legislation. But I believe as we begin the new millennium on January 1, 2001, what a great way to start that new millennium and what a great hope and opportunity for our children and grandchildren and frankly for ourselves, to begin our new millennium and our place in an even stronger economy in the global marketplace, by repealing this Income Tax Code and replacing it with something that the American people can trust and believe in once again.

OMITTED FROM THE CONGRESSIONAL RECORD OF WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 17, 1997

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Mr. GOSS (at the request of Mr. ARMEY), on account of personal reasons.

Mr. YATES (at the request of Mr. GEPHARDT), on account of illness.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Mr. BONILLA (at the request of Mr. ARMEY), for today on account of family illness.

Mr. YOUNG of Alaska (at the request of Mr. ARMEY), for today, after 3 p.m., on account of personal reasons.

Mrs. MEEK of Florida (at the request of Mr. GEPHARDT), for today, on account of official business.